

Arkansas Department of Health

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MEMORANDUM

TO: JON DAVIDSON, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

FROM: ROBERT BRECH

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2004

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE REVISIONS TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

The Department has initiated the process for the revision of the Arkansas Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Communicable Disease. The Department recently was mailed a questionnaire from the Office of Inspector General of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. The questionnaire related to Arkansas' reporting requirements for suspected or actual diseases that might indicate a bioterrorism event. The questionnaire made it evident that Arkansas' reporting requirements might be insufficient in the event of a bioterrorism attack. The changes to this regulation are proposed to further prepare in the unfortunate event that Arkansas is targeted for such an attack.

Areas with significant additions and/or revisions are as follows:

- Certain diseases that may indicate a bioterrorism event, whether suspected or confirmed, are to be reported immediately to the Department. Currently, the rules allow twenty-four hours for reporting.
- The following diseases were added to the list of reportable diseases:
 - Q Fever;
 - SARS;
 - Typhus; and
 - Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers

- Unrelated to bioterrorism, *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis* complex was added to the list of bacterial isolates that must be submitted to the Department upon request.